

THE
NECESSITY
OF
HERESIES
ASSERTED and EXPLAINED
IN A
SERMON
AD CLERUM.

By the Author of the *Catholic Balance.*

Mr. Hill, at Kildonan in Somerset.

And published as a Consolatory to the Church of England
in the days of her Controversie.

Exod. 14. 13. *And Moses said unto the people : Fear ye not, stand still, and see
the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day; For the Egyptians
which ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.*

IMPRIMATUR,

Concio hæc cui Titulus [The Necessity of Heresies Asserted.]

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I C O R. II. 9.

For there must be also Heresies among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifest among you.

HE that sedately considers the whole extraction and process of Evil; and the more prevalent diffusion of Vice and Lewdness against all the dictates of Vertue and Piety, while the lenity of the Divine Providence seems cessant and unprovoked: and that discerns the strength and operation of External Temptations unto evil, the passive easiness of our Tempers to admit them, the prodigious looseness of motion in all our Animal Affections, and their delusive influence upon our Understandings and our Wills: and that examines what originals gave being to the Malice of the Apostate Legions of Darknes to alienate them from their God, and to solicit our subversion likewise by indiscriminable methods of Imposture, must necessarily fall into

Origen's Resolution, (a) That if any Subjects, discussible among men, be hard to be traced, the Generation of Evil must be reckoned as one of them. And yet, as if the natural difficulties of our understanding herein had not been sufficient, even the Scriptures themselves

seem to multiply our Perplexities, while, notwithstanding the fundamental truth of this Religious Principle, That God is not the Author of any moral Evil, they yet

(a) Orig. contra Celsus, l. 4.
 "Εἰπερ ἐν ἀλλοῖς τις τέρας ἢ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ὑπερκόσμως δόμῃ, συνήκασθαι δεῖ τῇ φύσει ἡμῶν, ἐν ταῖς καὶ ἢ ἢ κακῶν ταχέως ἐν φύσει.

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proclaim unto us, not only a natural, but a moral necessity of Sins and Offences. Thus our Saviour preacheth a natural necessity of them: (b) *It must needs be that offences come, but wo be to him by whom the offence cometh.* And my Text averreth a moral necessity of Heresies and Divisions. *Δὲ ἔσται, &c. For there must be, there ought to be, there is need that there be Heresies.* Nay, that, which more astonisheth, is, that the very Mediator of our Peace, the great *Henoticon* of the whole World, in reconciling all Mankind in one Body unto God, of whose days it was prophesied, that the Lamb should lie down with the Lyon, tells his Apostles, at their first mission, (c) *That he came not to give peace, but a sword; to set a man at variance against his Father, and the Daughter against the Mother, &c.* And when we consider the malevolent nature of those Seeds of Discord in matters of Religion against all Societies, either Sacred, or Secular, and the blessed means of Eternal Life also; that these Mischiefs should become necessary, and the result of Christianity it self, seems a stupifying Riddle, and (that which fills me with all horror) gives colour for the publick allowance of all Heresies and Blasphemies whatsoever. Since then I am intangled in a Text so intricate, and withal so necessary to be explained, I must offer you the Petition that *Origen* made to his dear *Ambrose*, in his adventure against *Celsus*, "That you would give me your Prayers to the Supreme Fountain of Wisdom, that he may so invigorate me from above, and shed his heavenly Dews upon my present Meditations, *ἵνα χάρις ἐκτελέσῃ τοῖς λόγοις*, that the favour of this Discourse may administer grace unto the Hearers, and be like the favour of a Field which the Lord hath blessed.

The weight then of this Text puts us upon a three-fold Enquiry.

I. What

- I. What Heresie is.
- II. What Necessity there is of Heresies.
- III. What use we are to make of them.

I. Heresie then, literally and generally importing Division, in Philosophy, among the *Greeks*, signified the separation of Men into different Schools and Parties, upon the account of different Doctrines and Opinions, without any form of Excommunication, Execration, or Extermination from common and friendly Society. Among the *Jews* Heresie consists in varying from, and neglecting the Traditions of their Rabbins, and is by them prosecuted with the severest Curses and Anathemae whatsoever. The Divisions that have appeared in the Christian Profession, are by St. *Basil* the Great, in his first Canonical Epistle to *Amphilochius*, distributed into three Classes, viz. *Parasynagogues*, *Schisms* and *Heresies*. The first are Uncanonical Assemblies of men unto voluntary and irregular Exercises of Religion under the pretence of a more active Zeal. *Schism* is a breach of Peace, Union, and Orderly Government in the Church, under the wanton Claims of a greater Liberty. *Heresie* is an insurrection against the Church, and her Doctrines, derived from the Scriptures, and universally received from the beginning, under the imputation of falshood or deficiency, and the ostentation of a purer and more perfect Knowledge. Which being the greatest of all Religious Confusions, and by the Apostolick and Canonical Discipline exposed to the strictest Censures of the Church, will need some Characteristick Description, to the end, that we may at present aggravate the doubt, how so vile a Monster should become necessary to the Church, that so directly intends her dissolution. *Tertullian* chargeth

(d) Tertull.
Præscript.
adv. Hæ.

geth the Hereticks of his Age with many Irregularities against both Discipline and Morals: (d) *That they made no distinction between Heathens, Catechumens, or Christians, but imparted their Mysteries equally unto all: That they reputed Simplicity to be prostration of Discipline: That they kept Communion with all Parties against the Church: That they were all proud, and all pretended knowledg: The very Females, how pert, and daring to assume the very Offices of the Hierarchy! That their Ordinations were rash, light and unconstant; that sometimes they set up Novices, sometimes Men engaged to the World, sometimes the very Apostates of the Church: That they had one Bishop to day, and to morrow another: That he that was a Deacon to day, to morrow sunk to a Reader: And he that was to day a Priest, to morrow reversed to a Lay-man; for that with them the Laity assume the Services of the Priesthood: That their whole preaching was not to convert Heathens, but pervert true Christians; not to build any thing, but destroy the Church: That they conversed with Magicians, Jugglers and Sorcerers. Thus far Tertullian. Nay, that which is most remarkable, *Hereſe* was at first the issue of Sorcery; the Grand-father thereof being *Simon Magus*; who transmitted his Sorcery and *Hereſe* together to his trusty Disciple *Menander*, who in both out-did his Original; and thus descended all the various Brood of the *Gnosticks*, and other like Vermin, who took their Names from the respective Founders or Principles of their several Impieties. They blasphemed the Creator, *Moses*, and the Prophets; vilified and corrupted the New Testament at their pleasure; forged false Gospels and Writings for Canonical, and set up false Prophecies as Revelations of the *Paraclete*: They were sometimes circumcised with the *Jews*; sometimes they sacrificed with the Heathens: consecrated the foulest Pollutions into Mysteries;*

steries; and betrayed true Christians up to all manner of Persecutions. This, and a much more dreadful, account we have of Heresies from the Fathers and Ecclesiastical Histories. From whom let us ascend to the Apostles, and see what they say of them. St. Jude calls the Hereticks of his time (e) *ungodly men, that turn'd the grace of God into wantonness, denying the only God, and our Lord Jesus Christ; filthy dreamers, defilers of the flesh, despisers of Dominion, blasphemers of Dignities, clouds without water, carried about of winds; withering fruitless trees, raging waves of the Sea, foaming out their own shame; mockers, separatists, sensual, and without the spirit.* Saint Peter foretells of the same Hereticks, (f) *That their false Teachers should bring in damnable Heresies, and deny the Lord God that bought them; men of unclean lusts, despisers of Government, presumptuous, selfwilled, blasphemers of Dignities, having eyes full of adultery, constant in sin, beguiling unstable Souls, having covetous hearts, cursed children, forsaking the right way, and following the way of Balaam; wells without water, clouds carried about with a tempest, speaking great swelling words of vanity, and thereby alluring those who were clean escaped from them that live in error.* St. Paul saith of those that made Divisions at Rome, (g) *That they served not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and with good words, and fair speeches, deceived the hearts of the simple.* Of the Cretan Hereticks he instructs Titus, (h) *That they were fond of Jewish fables, being turned from the truth, and being disorderly babblers and deceivers.* He foretells Timothy, (i) *That the time would come, in which they would not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own lusts would heap to themselves Teachers, having itching ears, turning away from the truth, and enclining unto fables:* (k) *That they should be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers,*

(e) Epist. of St. Jude, v. &c.

(f) 2 Pet. 2.

(g) Rom. 16. 17, 18.

(h) Tit. 2.

(i) 2 Tim. 4.

(k) 2 Tim. 3.

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blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of good men: Traytors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; creeping into houses, and leading away captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Which, if we take one collective view of the whole aggregate of Hereticks, we shall find all these abominations universally diffused among them: if we consider them distributively, it is not to be understood, as if every Heretick were actually guilty of all these open Villanies, but that in every Heretick there are more or less of these Impieties, being the proper productions, or improvements of their several Heresies, according to the several tempers and inclinations of Men upon which they operate; since Men encline to different Heresies according to their previous dispositions unto evil, in which they are confirmed by those pleasing errors which they admire and entertain.

Now if such be the Complexion, Genius, and Original of all Heresies; if their Extraction be so apparently from, and their tendency leads unto Hell, how falls the Church under a Necessity of them? Why should *St. Paul* say there must be Heresies? Shall we make them the issues of an Eternal Fate, or of the *Anti-God* of the *Manichees*? Or shall we father them on an Horrible Decree of God for an irrelative and inexorable Reprobation? Or shall we dream with *Lactantius*, That God originally put the Devil upon the amazing employment of scattering Snares and Temptations among the Sons of Men? *St. James* cautions us against all the least approaches to

(1) *Jam. i. 13.* this jealousy of the Lord our God: (1) *Let no man say, when*

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when he is tempted, that he is tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. Whereupon we must search out for such a necessity of Heresies, as is imputable, not to the operative Determination of God, but the Evils of Men: Since there must be Heresies, they must be ours, not God's; They must derive from an unclean, and puddled, not from a Divine Fountain, or Original: For, *Let God be true, and every man a liar.*

Except therefore only violent Force, All Necessity is either Natural, or Moral: Natural, consisting in the proper tendencies of operative Causes to their suitable Effects: Moral, in the reasonable proposals of Wisdom or Equity. And both these kinds of Necessity are either Primary, Simple, and Absolute: or Secondary only, and Consequential, with respect to antecedent Causes, voluntary, or unnecessitated. Thus in Naturals: That I am, is to me of absolute necessity; but that, under the folly of too much Wine, I talk and act idly, is from no primary and absolute Necessity, irresistible from the beginning; but consequential only on my Intemperance. That I can see, is from a natural Necessity absolute and primary: but that I actually must see, is consequential to the opening of mine Eyes. Thus likewise in Morals: That a Man love the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, is primarily, simply, and eternally necessary: but the moral Necessity of my Repentance is consequential only on my Sin. That I do exact Justice to every Son of Man, is of necessity absolutely moral: but the moral Necessity of repairing Injuries is secondary, and introduced by my former Wrongs. Upon which preliminary distinction of the kinds and forms of Necessity, we are now to examine, First, what Natural, and Secondly, what Moral Necessities there

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are for the admission of Heresies in the Christian Religion.

First then, The Truth and Sanctity of God require us to resolve, that there is no natural necessity of Heresies primitive, and absolute, by the operation of him, that *made not Death, nor hath any delight in the destruction of the Living.* For from the beginning, the original state of Man needed no kind of evil to corrupt it. But all the natural necessity of them is secondary, suppositive, and consequential to precedent Sins, and those actual too, and most times habitual. For though other Immoralities begin to break out in the very first essays of our tender Understandings, yet the inculcations of Heresie have no such early influence on our Fancies, but require antecedently a longer sense and experience of Good and Evil: To which, when a Man is arrived, he cannot be precipitated into the guilt of Heresie, without want either of Piety or Care. For though a Soul aspiring with all care to a great devotion, may in the infancy of that piety be ignorant of many excellent Doctrines, yet by this care he will espouse no Principle absolutely as fundamental, either in heart or profession, which neither the Voice of Nature, nor the Rules of Faith have clearly revealed to his Understanding: nor oppose those Points that, either by the Light of Nature, or of God's holy Word, have ever been received by the Universal Church as Fundamentals. And he that doth otherwise, lets himself loose by his own fault: and if thereby he necessarily falls into Heresie, it is a fatal mischief consequential to his inconsiderate negligence. *What man is he then that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.*

This then sufficiently proves the Negative, that no Heresies can be incurred without foregoing faults: but
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we are here further to enquire what positive influence there is in Sins to determine the Sinner to a consequential Heresie. For though it is plain, that every Heretick is a Sinner ; yet not that every, no nor the foulest Sinners are always Hereticks. So that upon the supposition of Evil, it yet appears not that there is a natural necessity thence consequent, that there must be Heresies.

To the elucidation whereof, it is to be observed, That though every Sinner is not a professed Heretick, yet in every Apostate Conscience there are Seeds of Heresie, that suggest thereunto false and imposturous Consolations. Thus the Voluptuous heretically thinks his Pleasures innocent, and the boons of Nature : The Covetous, in like manner, thinks his Disease prudence, frugality and piety to his Off-spring : The Proud and Ambitious fancies his Airs to be magnanimous : The Severe, conceits his Cruelty to be Justice : The Hypocrite believes that God is contented with the outside, or searcheth not the heart : The Violent thinks there is no Providence, or Judgment to come : And the most Orthodox Sinners have too easie thoughts of the Divine Lenity, as if it could, or would connive at mens Iniquities. Thus Error is fatally interwoven with our Vices ; and the Oyl that feeds the Lamp of God enkindled in our Souls, is precipitated by the violence of our Lusts ; and being thus extinguished, leaves us in night and folly, and the shadow of death, in which we must needs plainly follow every *Ignis fatuus*, every twinkling Fancy or Delusion, that occurs in all our aims and appetites of Good and Evil. So that when so much matter for Heresie is preparatively collected in a vicious Soul, it is naturally necessary and consequent, that it break out into an actual flame, when our Vices are grown up into Obstinacy and Ostentation, and are solicited to Ambition

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tion by incidental and suitable Motives and Temptations.

For we must observe, That the natural necessity of actual and avowed Heresies results not purely from a meer internal Vice, but also from the apposite concurrence of external Allurements; upon which, if the vicious Soul be absolutely intent, and a profession of Heresie be the only way in prospect to attain them; there 'tis naturally necessary that the uncorrected Appetite fall into Heresie. Thus *Thebutes* at *Jerusalem*, *Novatian* at *Rome*, and *Arius* at *Alexandria*, (as *Epiphanius* reports him) and many others elsewhere, through the eager desire of an Episcopal Character, denied them by the Church, fell into revengeful Passions also, and thence into Heresie by a natural consequence. Thus *Liberius*, Bishop of *Rome*, after he had witnessed a good Confession, and for that went into Exile; yet impatience of the pressure, and an appetite to the Glory of the *Roman* Chair being too predominant, hurried him into *Arianism*, and a subscription to the *Arimin* Confession. Now here was no primary Necessity that these Men should be ambitious, and from thence heretical: but being under the impotency of Ambition, against which they had not duly watched; and a profession of Heresie being a ready way to attain it, they were naturally driven by the blasts thereof into Acts heretical by a secondary and consequential Necessity. For when Men are once subdued to their Lusts, they are passively hurried away to all the precipices of Evil, to which the stings of Passion or Appetite shall at random drive them. And as this gives a clear account of that natural Necessity, by which the Vices of particular Men dispose them to Heresie: so if we take a prospect of the general diffusion and prevalence of Vice in the Affections of Men, in order to

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their secular Interests or Pleasures, by the love of which the Powers of Darknes support their tyranny over the Souls of Men; to destroy all which, Christianity was instituted from above; the general reasons of things will conclude it necessary, that the Faith in Christ Jesus must ever find many prejudiced Adversaries, animated by Satanical Artifices and Sollicitations to oppose and defeat it: to compass which, no way is so effectual as to debauch its Purity by perverse interpretations, and to render its Truth dubious by litigious divisions: And Man being extremely prone to these ever since the dispersion of *Babel*, it is natural to presage, that through so great enmity as Christianity must needs meet with, by natural consequence Heresies and Divisions must be framed against it. According to which *Phænomenon*, upon the general prospect and tendency of things, and the various fermentation of Passions upon the introduction and process of Christianity, our Saviour foretold, that of necessity, consequential to the Prejudices and Lusts of Men, there must be Offences, and that the event, tho not the intent of his coming, *rebus sic stantibus*, would certainly determine in inevitable variances between the nearest Relations, and blow up an unquenchable flame in the very bowels and vitals of both Kingdoms and Families.

But, beside this natural Necessity of Heresies consequential to the sinful state of Man, I told you that the words of the Apostle seem to import a moral Necessity for the propagation of them. *Δὲ γὰρ, &c. There ought to be, there is need there should be Heresies.* A Proposition of a strange complexion at the first glance, and at which the weak and prejudicate may be easily offended. For there have been Opinionists, that have thought it unbecoming the Divinity to permit a meer possibility of
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moral Evil in the World, which it had been congruous to the Supreme Wisdom and Goodness to have made a System of immaculate and unchangeable Holiness to the Lord; not considering that such a model would preclude the Sovereign *Regalia* of God's Government, and put his Creatures out of a condition of Religious Obedience, in that whatsoever Acts and Operations of the Creatures are not voluntary, but the passive productions of an Almighty Influence, are not reducible to the formal Reason and *Scheffs* of a Legislative Empire and Government. But our question here is of a greater difficulty. For though a possibility of Evil be fundamentally supposed in the institution of Laws, yet what moral Necessity is there of it in any healthy or just State of Government, especially in the State of Religion? Is it not enough, under so pure a Theocracy, to admit a possibility of Offences, as the *πάσχα*, or *παρασκευάς*, the Need-nots, and vain Excrecencies of Man's Life? but must they be annumerated to the Necessaries, and adapted among the mighty Importances of God's Providence in the Conduct of Religion? This is that that puzzles, this drives us to the *ὡς βάθος*. *O the depth of the riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

But since all Scriptures are written for the instruction of Devout and Religious Souls, which God Almighty communicates to all, according to their measures, studies and benefits; I will with all sobriety offer to consideration, what seems to be the fair and clear account of the Divine Wisdom in this particular. In order whereunto, we are to examine three things. First, What that is which *St. Paul* here calls Heresies, and of which he asserts a moral Necessity. Secondly, What God does toward the production or propagation of them. And thirdly,

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thirdly, What kind and degree of moral Necessity there is to induce God to such a form of concurrence as we shall discover in this Enquiry.

First then, When St. Paul saith, *There must be Heresies*, he intends no internal Principles or Passions heretical, of these he asserts no moral Necessity in this place: but only on presupposition of these, he makes the external eruptions of them in heretical professions to be morally useful and necessary. This appears from the End in prospect, *That they that are approved, may be manifested.* Now external Acts only can give us a distinctive sense of Mens Qualifications, and so are only necessary to that use. So that the sense is to be thus resolved: *Since there are among you men of corrupt and heretical Principles against the Peace and Fundamentals of Christianity, with latent Vices, whence these Errors spring, it is necessary and convenient that they should break out into open and actual Heresies and Divisions, in order to a detection of them, and a manifestation of the sincere.* Which is the effect, not of habitual merely, but of actual and professed Heresies.

Secondly, It is to be considered what God does, how far he concurs to the production or increase of these actual Heresies. First then, As God instils not the inherent Principles or Vices heretical, so neither doth he promote them into outward Acts by any influential force upon their Wills, at least not ordinarily, nor in a manner obstructing their present power or liberty of conversion, or suggesting greater animosity to their former prejudices. Though otherwise, it were not unjust in Almighty God to compel an inward Heretick, against his designs of concealment and secrecie, to discover his ulcer even by immediate impulses on his Soul, when else the secrecie would be more injurious to others, or more hurtful.

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ful to himself, than an open detection. For so it happens, that an undiscerned Heretick may transmit an undiscerned venom into many Members of the Church by the advantage of an outside Communion, which he perhaps may not in an open state of Separation; according to that wicked Maxim in Politicks, *Of making ones self of that Party which he designeth to destroy.* And many times an open discovery exposeth the Heretick to such shame, condemnation, and means of conviction too, as may end in his Conversion, which he might have no advantage of under a covert privacy. Secondly, God, not restraining the Heretick from a liberty to return, may put him into such occurrences of Objects, Acquaintance, or Examples, by attending unto which he may give vent to his Thoughts and Principles, in order to the attainment of some flattering Hopes. And in this God doth no evil, because they are no inevitable Stumbling-blocks to him, he being at liberty to recall himself, and not yield up his Soul to the unlawful Appetites and Temptations that present themselves before him. Thirdly, When a man hath devoted himself to all Impiety, God may justly deliver him up to the power of lying and Apostate Spirits, as he did *Ahab's* wicked Prophets, to act him to all those kinds and degrees of actual Sins and Heresies from which the hand of God shall not restrain them. Fourthly, When Impiety is rampant, God may permit it a greater or less latitude of acting, according as to his Infinite Wisdom shall seem expedient in the general issue of things: by which greater or straiter limitation the Sinner shall not be forced to any actual Crime, but only confined within such a compass, without which he shall not be able to exert his Malice: Even as the Envy of the Devil at *Job* was permitted Exercise, but with a precaution not to touch his Life. In all which methods of
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God's positive, permissive, or restrictive Concurrence, there is no tincture of the least Iniquity, not only from the just Causes, and laudable Ends thereof; but because God infuses no evil Intention into either the actual or habitual Wills of wicked Men, but only either insatuates, permits, or encloses them, and their operations, as he seeth requisite. For that, which these Ways and Counsels of God are concerned in, is not the inner Determination of the Impious Mind to the love or choice of Evil, in which alone consists the guilt before God; but only at the most, the restriction of it in its outward Actions, which considered separately in themselves, from all relation to the Will that acts them, may be indeed occasionally hurtful, but involve not in them the intrinsic guilt, which is purely seated in the Malice of the Mind. For a Falshood unwittingly uttered, is no Lye: and in Man-slaughter 'tis not Chance, but Intention makes the Murther. So that these Divine Concurrences, touching only the bare external Acts of Heresie separately from their Fountains, affect not the malice, nor the radical guilt of Evil, but only the results and consequences of it (which are on this side the Mind, wherein the guilt only lodges) with no other design, but to convert them to a great and noble good. And if God, having dominion over the life and fate of Man, may permit a violent Man to murther the Innocent, though the Murther be an inevitable oppression of the Murthered, while God instills no malice into the Mind of the Murtherer; much more is the Almighty innocent in his Providential Permissions of actual Heresies. 'Tis true indeed, that Heresie is the murther of the Soul, whereas Homicide is only the destru&tion of the Body: but to this I answer, That the murtherous tendency of Acts Heretical, is neither inevitable, nor insuperable, nor irrecoverable. For the pas-

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fiveness of the Profelyte is voluntary, and so he is *Felo de se*, his own Murtherer; though at the temptation of a Seducer, and so cannot charge his murder wholly upon the very Tempter, much less upon God, who did not force him to imbibe, but by his Word, and the good motions of his Holy Spirit, forewarned to beware of the Delusion; and in mercy to him offers him time, and means of recovery, ere the poyson determine in his eternal Death. And when to these Considerations we shall add, That all these Procedures of Almighty God are occasioned by the impulsive provocations of monstrous Impieties, and diffusive Corruptions, we cannot condemn our Heavenly Father of Injustice, if he had no other end herein, but only (m) *To deliver up the ungodly unto strong delusions, that they should believe a lie; to the end, they might all be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* But since this is not the design, but the event only of these Divine Methods upon the finally Incurable; and there are many gracious ends to the good of all Men in God's permission of actual Heresies, in which consists this moral Necessity of them mentioned by the Apostle: We are now smoothly brought to the third Consideration; What is the Moral Necessity for their being in the World.

That therefore is Morally necessary, which either the Rules of Duty, or Dictates of Wisdom recommend; and this either strictly, so that the omission will be either a fault, or a damage: or else more freely in such a latitude, that though the omission be not injurious, yet the observation will be expedient: in which latter degree and sense, Moral Necessity is no more than Rational Convenience, and amounts not to the force of a rigorous Obligation. And both these kinds of Moral Necessity may be either absolute in the nature and reason of the things themselves,

(m) 2 Theff. 2.
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selves, or relative to antecedent Causes, of which they are consequential ; or to final Issues, to which they are ministerial by a Moral influence and motion on the Mind. Which being thus premised, it is natural to resolve, that the Moral Necessity of actual Heresies descends not from any Laws of Duty, but from the Reasons of Wisdom : which, upon an antecedent Supposition of wicked Men, and secret Hereticks in the Church, proposes the detection of them, in a manifestation of their Principles, extremely beneficial and convenient. First, To the Hereticks themselves, in order to their conversion. Secondly, To the Wavering, in order to their probation and settlement. And thirdly, To the Approved and Faithful, in order to their glory.

First then, The permission of actual Heresies is intended by God to the good of Hereticks many ways. For first, While Men kept their Heresies close within their secret Cells, the Catholick Doctors, not discerning the Hearts, make no direct applications to them to reform and cleanse them. So that detection is necessary in order to their better instruction. And secondly, During the secrecy of Heresies within the Breasts of Men, they fondly imagine, that upon a discovery they will take mightily in the World, and charm great multitudes of Men into rapture and admiration, and that no Man will be able to gainsay them. But so it always happens, that, tho Fools and Wretches may be imposed upon, yet the Wise and best part of Mankind will despise and abominate what the Hereticks thought would ravish them : And thus collecting all their force of Truth and Wisdom, will baffle and confound them, and hiss them off the Stage, and expose them to the publick Sense of Men as the Pests of Religion, and Agents of the wicked One. Which Issues so defeating the false Hopes and Expectations

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tions of the Heretick, together with the convictions of Truth to be found in the Labours of those that refute him, the general contempt and abomination past upon him, the reverberations of his Conscience, deserted by the Spirit of God, and scourged by the Spirits of Darkness, whom he served, are proper and forcible motives to Humiliation and Repentance, which nought but an habitual and obdurate Stupor can resist. And yet if these prove ineffectual, the Lenity of God uses other means to tire them out of their own Follies. For when men have once forsaken the way of Truth, they travel into perplexing and endless mazes, from one Error to another, either successive and consequential, or else casual and collateral. For as *Theodoret* (n) observes: *The ways of Falsehood are cross and intricate*: so that in those that are bewildred in them, is fulfilled that of the *Psalmist*; (o) *They went astray in the Wilderness out of the way, and found no City to dwell in: Hungry and thirsty, their Soul fainted in them.* And being in such a desert state, they will (if at all, or ever) be apt to relent, *And to cry unto the Lord in their trouble, to deliver them out of their distress, to lead them forth by the right way, that they may go, and dwell in the City that is refreshed with the streams and fountains of living waters.*

(n) Theodor.
de Curand.
Græc. affectib.
Ser. 2.

Πολυαίδησις
γὰρ πρὸς τὸ
ἰδίους αἰ
ἀπεργασθῆναι.

(o) Psal. 107.

Secondly, The diffusion of open Heresies contributes to the probation and settlement of wavering, indifferent, and ungrounded Souls. For in times of Ignorance, or Carnal security, many Men attend not to the force or design of Religious Institutions, but sleep on supinely in the implicit Faith of the fashionable Religion. In which case and state of drowsiness, no moral or external Good is so apt to excite men to a severe enquiry and study of True Religion, as the outrage of Heresies, which startle Men out of their heavy Lethargy, yea, even out of their Graves, by a quick

quick and forcible Resurrection, crying, as it were, aloud with the voice of a Trumpet (and that a Trumpet of War too) in the ears of every such dull and doating Christian; *Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.* To this end God sometime permitted false Prophets to arise, and to tempt his People to Idolatry, that he might try and confirm them. Thus Moses: (p) *If there arise among you a Prophet, or a (p) Deut. 13. Dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign, or a wonder: 1, 2, 3. And the sign or wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go serve other Gods, &c. Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that Prophet, or that Dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul: viz. Permitting such Temptations to arise, not to be of equal force with the Miracles of Moses and Prophets, but only strange enough to startle the Careless and the Improvident, and to try them by the Prodigy, and to provoke them to compare it with the Testimonial Fortifications of Moses and the Prophets, and thus finally to instruct and confirm them in the Laws and Ordinances of the God of Israel.* Thus at the entrance of Christianity, our Lord foretold, (q) *That many (q) Matt. 24. false Prophets, and false Christs should arise, and shew great 11, 24, 25. signs and wonders, and deceive many: Behold (saith he) I have told you before; (r) That we might not believe every (r) 1 John 4. 1. Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God, when many false Prophets are gone out into the World.*

Thirdly, the Divine Permission of Heresies is useful to the manifest justification of the Faithful, and the Faith. For while the truth of our Faith meets with no opposition, Men are generally content with the simplicity of its Tradition in Creeds, and summary Abstracts of Christian Doctrine, and with the plain sense of the obvious and

easy

ease Scriptures. But when it's attacked by Heresies, and false Principles, pretendedly deduced from Divine Authority, this puts the Zeal of the Faithful into a mighty fervour to trace the Sacred Oracles, through all the Prophecies and Mysteries interspersed both in the Old and New Testament; and by a Canonical Interpretation from the concurrent harmony of them, to deduce a firm *Catena* of all the Catholick Principles of Christian Piety, and to chase away into shame and confusion every Imposture that exalts it self against the healing Truth and Wisdom of God. Thus as soon as Hereticks were crept into the

(s) *Jud. Epist.*

Church, St. Jude (s) gave all diligence to write to them of the common Salvation, and to exhort them to contend earnestly for the Faith that was once delivered unto the Saints, viz. by discussing the Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus. Thus Catechism makes us Babes in Christ, but even Heresie it self makes the *ἀειπνός*, the Approved and Faithful perfectly mature in the Wisdom that is of God: by which he hath, and will destroy the wisdom of the Wise, and bring to nought the understanding of the Prudent. Heresie therefore, which *Celsus*, and other Enemies of Christianity, deride as the blemish of our Religion, proves the goodness of it in the Original, and the glory of it in the End.

(t) *Orig. contra Celsum*, l. 3.

— Ὁυδίνης ἀνέγνωτο, ὅτι καὶ οἱ ἀντιπαρὸντες αὐτῷ ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡρώδης καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ἀντιπαρὸντες αὐτῷ ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

For it was a sagacious hint of *Origen*,

(t) That all different Heresies in all Wisdom, secular or sacred, spring from some good and noble Original. Which, while it can be preserved virgin and inviolate, suffers no reproach from the lascivient follies of vain and imprudent *Sciolists*. And as to the Majestick glory of our Religion, it sits in the Firmament of Heaven on high, clothed with the Sun, and the beams of Essential Light, which all the filthy Exhalations of Spiritual Wizards and

Impostors

Impostors will never be able to darken or vilify: Since Christianity ever improved by oppositions, emerged above Heresies, and lives the more strongly by continual Persecutions; and by its immovable perpetuity against all possible force and fraud, becomes a Symbol and a Pledge of that Eternity, which it promiseth, and to which it leads us.

Thirdly, Having thus discovered both the natural and moral Necessity of Heresies in the World, Let us in the last place consider, what seasonable Uses, (besides those, which are already touched on) Humane Prudence, under the conduct of the Divine Wisdom, will suggest unto us. Upon which, being to speak to an Auditory of a double Character, it is fit I should offer some Considerations proper to each Order.

And here indeed, were there time to expatiate, lies a large Plain before me, relating to the Discipline, Doctrine, and Sanctity of the Priesthood; and the Sincerity, Humility, and Morals of the People. But a regard to your uneasiness, the narrowness of the time, and the Laws of Modesty, must, and shall confine me.

First then, The Administration of Discipline, being in the hands of my Superior, requires from him a Lesson of Prudence and Wisdom to me, and to us all, and consequently enjoins me silence in this particular. And perhaps the present State and Circumstances of the Church require no such accurate enforcements of it in this juncture: The Counsel of St. *Austin* being seasonable, (u) *Nos* (u) *Aug. de*
vero ad sanam Doctrinam pertinere arbitramur, ut canes in *Fid. & Ope-*
Ecclesiæ propter pacem Ecclesiæ toleremus: Canibus vero *rib. cap. 5.*
sanctum, ubi pax Ecclesiæ tuta est, non demus. So that I am immediately to pass to the consideration of that Doctrine, which we ought to support, for the prevention, diminution, or extirpation of Heresies. And here, my Brethren,

The Necessity of Heresies asserted, &c.

- Brethren, you need a Draught from the Judgment of a Superior : And if our Reverend Ordinary had thought good, instead of making proof of me, to have filled up this place of Sacred Oratory himself, he would have given us an excellent Copy from the Authority of the Scriptures, and the Prudence of the Primitive Fathers. In opposition to the Follies and Fables of Heresie, he would
- (w) Tit. 2. 7, 8. have admonished us in (w) *all our Doctrine, to shew uncorruptness, gravity, and sincerity; sound speech, that cannot be condemned, that they of the contrary part may be*
- (x) 2 Tim. 2. *ashamed : (x) To study to shew our selves approved unto God, Workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* In opposition to the disputatious vanity of Hereticks, he would have forbidden us (y) to
- (y) 1 Tim. 6. *doat about questions, strive about words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising, and perverse disputing with men of corrupt minds : remembring the magnificent sense of Clemens Alexandrinus in this particular :*
- (z) Clem. Alex. Paedag. 1. 2. c. 7. *(z) Not to strive for empty victory, for that with us quietness is the designed end of Conferences. (a) For the Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient : In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth : And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil : Thus Ignatius to the Ephesians : (b) In opposition to their anger, be you gentle ; to their boasting, be you lowly ; to their blasphemies, oppose you your Prayers ; against their Errors, stand you firm in the Faith ; against their rage, be you always mild ; not aiming to imitate them, but being emulous of the Lord. In contrariety to heretical Innovations, he would have bid us keep close to the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints : To magnify the excellency,*
- (a) 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25, 26.
- (b) Ignat. ad Ephes.

excellency, and improve the use of Catechetical Doctrines; (c) *To hold fast the Tradition of Faith, the form of* (c) 2 Tim. 1. *sound words, which we have received from the Apostles, and* 13, 14. *by the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in us, to keep that good thing which was committed to us.* For they indeed pursue a vain glory by daring enquiries into Riddles, that tend to the subversion of the Hearers: but St. Gregory Nazianzen gives us sounder direction; (d) *Not to despise the trite* (d) Greg. Naz. *and common Principles, not to hunt out for novelties, to* *με. ευρη.* *gain a reputation with the multitude.* In all our methods *Μη ἀνίστα* *of Instruction, he would have enjoined us to preach, not* *τὸ εἰσδόν, μη* *our selves, or our own Conceptions, or meer Humane* *θῆναι τὸ κρυ* *and novel Traditions, but Jesus Christ, and him cruci-* *πτον, ἵνα ἐνδ-* *fied, and the power of his Resurrection, and such noble* *κησῶν ἐν* *Mysteries of Salvation from the sole Authority of the Di-* *τοῖς πλείον.* *vine Oracles: Whence the Priest's lips are to preserve* *knowledge, and the People are to seek the law at his mouth.* And you know the High-Priest gave no Oracular Responses to the People from the Holy of Holies, but what the Excellent Glory, that dwelt between the Cherubims, had written with rays of purest light upon the Pectoral. In all our Doctoral Offices he would have required of us an unwearied diligence, *in season, and out of season, not to neglect, but to stir up the gift of God which is in us, by the imposition of the hands of our Fathers, and the Presbytery; watching in all things, enduring afflictions, doing the work of Evangelists, making full proof of our Ministry, that being faithful unto death, God may give us a Crown of life.*

The last thing relating to our Order, and the great Envy of Hereticks, is our Sanctity. The Glory of which is indeed preferable to all the secular Splendor and Power upon Earth. And had I time to describe it, not only from the Charge and Charter of the Apostles, but from

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the Mystical Resemblances thereof in the Institutes of Consecration, Portions, Offices, and Authorities of the Sons of *Aaron* and *Levi*, it would appear, that our Order is no mean part of the Divine Care, in which he hath clothed us with so much Holiness and Glory, to stand before the Lord our God, and to be instead of God unto the People, and Mediators for the People in things pertaining unto God. The White Robe of our Solemnities represents an Angelical Purity even here, since the Angel that attended our Lord's Resurrection appeared in Raiment as white as Snow; and an Angelical Glory hereafter, when (e) *he that overcometh shall be clothed in white raiment*. In which emblematick Colour St. Hierom tells us (f) *That the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, and all the Ecclesiastical Orders were of old adorned*: a Colour recommended by Plato as representative of Men peaceable and illuminated: agreeably whereunto St. Clemens Alexandrinus observes of the white Vestments used by the Clergy in his time, (g) *That they recommended the habit of their mind*. Which I here urge with so much remark, not that we should think our selves the more sacred for the habit, which in it self indeed is senseless and indifferent; but to stop the mouths of those that declaim against the solemn use of the white Robe in our Religious Rituals, which was so early received in the most Primitive Ages as a symbol of our present Holiness, and our future Glory: And not only to reprove them, but to advertise our selves of that great internal purity of Soul, which not only the weight, but the very Pontificalia, the solemn Ornaments of our Calling recommend to our tenderest care and culture. For instead of gazing on our Phylacteries, or Plumes of outside Honour, it is more necessary to dread the danger of our Calling, and to tremble at the Precipice from on high. He that reads the

(e) Rev. 3. 5.

(f) Hieron.
Dialog. int.
Attic. & Cri-
tob.

(g) Clem. Alex.
Pæd. l. 3. c. 11.
Καὶ παρ' ἡμῶν
ἡ τοιαύτη σο-
φία τοῦ Θεοῦ
ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρετή.
ἐκ δὲ τούτου.

the Apology that *Nazianzen* made for flying from the Episcopal Seat at *Nazianzum*, will be moved long to experience his own Graces, before he enters upon an holy Charge, closely resenting that pressing Question, *Who is sufficient for these things?* And when he is initiated into the Services of the Sanctuary, will cloath himself with fear, and humility, and *subdue his Body, lest after he hath preached to others, himself become a castaway.* The Sons of *Aaron*, that were the *μυσταγοι*, Judges of the Blemishes, both of the People, and their Oblations, were themselves to be without blemish. (b) *Spea kunto Aaron, (b) Lev. 21. saying, Whosoever he be of thy Seed in their Generations* ^{17.} *that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the Bread of his God.* For it is but natural, that we first act the *Levite* and the Priest upon our selves, before we administer these Liturgies or Operations unto others. That which our Saviour saith of his Kingdom, *The Kingdom of God is within you;* is also true of the Priesthood. Now the *Levite* was to cleanse, and keep holy the Temple and Utensils of the Sanctuary: and the Priest therein, and therewith, was to make the Oblations to the Most High. The *Stoicks* have rightly set it, That every wise Man is a Priest: in whom sobriety, like the *Levite*, cleanses the Temple, Vessels, and Affections of our Body: and Devotion is the Priesthood, that hallows, and dedicates us, and all our Actions, to the Living God. If then we are Priests and *Levites* only by an Hierarchical and External Character, and not inwardly so by Purity and Grace, what are we but whited Walls, and Sepulchres, whose surface is indeed gay, but the inside nothing but rubbish, and rottenness, and the Bones of dead Men, whom we have murdered and devoured by our Sins, and which will appear in Judgment against us at the General Resurrection of the Body? Since then we are de-

scended into the Field, to fight before the Armies of God against Principalities, and Powers, and Spiritual Wickednesses in high Places, (i) Let us follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, fight the good fight of faith, and thus lay hold on that eternal life whereunto we are called.

(i) 1 Tim. 6.
11, 12.

And now, my Reverend Brethren, it is time to scatter some Religious Offers to the Laick part of this Assembly.

And you, Good People, remember carefully, that you are in the Station of Disciples, and are as much bound to learn, as we to teach : and in order thereunto, to be humble, diligent, and tractable, without which no Scholar thrives under the best Tutors. Obedience therefore to our Religious Methods and Directions, is your indispensable duty, as well in order to your own improvement, as our consolation. Thus the Author to the *Hebrews*

(k) Heb. 13.
17.

teaches you : (k) Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for this is unprofitable for you. For the neglect of this plunges you into all manner of Sins, Schisms, Heresies, and Impieties. The general mistake of common People is to despise the Doctrine that leadeth unto Practice, and their ears itch after strange and empty Novelties, that they may seem to know much. But a good old Father, Saint, and Martyr, giveth you his Sense ;

(l) Iren. adv.
Heres. l. 2.
c. 45.

(l) That it is better to be plain Men, and to know but little, and by charity to come near unto God, than by fancying to know much, to blaspheme against him ; to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified, than by subtlety of questions, and much babling, to fall into impiety. Think not that we envy you the glory of an excellent Wisdom. I can freely say with Moses, Would to God all the Lord's People were Prophets ; and I embrace knowledg heartily

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in every one whom it puffeth not up into vanity and insolence. To this the Wisdom of God calleth, to this the serene Spirit of God continually invites the wandering and inobstant Sons of Men. But if you then will be wise indeed, learn that Wisdom that is substantially such, that leadeth unto life, and teacheth you the things that belong unto your peace. The importunate Appetite of an unreasonable Knowledge of Good and Evil had at first such an issue, as should for ever affright us from the like wanton and precipitous Adventures. The *Corinthians* coveted the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit; and St. Paul in some measure corrects, and in some degree allows the Appetite: (m) *but yet he teacheth them a more excellent way. What then is that? Follow after Charity: For Charity never faileth, though all other Graces cease. Charity suffereth long, and is kind: Charity envieth not, vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up, doth not behave it self unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth: Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.* And in distinction of true from vain Religion, St. James gives you a clear Direction; (n) *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, this man's Religion is vain. True Religion, and undefiled before God, and the Father, is to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World. For, What doth the Lord your God require of you, but to do judgment, and love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? Which care, as it would preserve us from the Snares of Heresie, so would it at least shame and confound, if not reduce the Adversaries; whereas the Debaucheries and Abominations of those, who pretend to the Communion of the Church, as they are an offence to God, so do they make us a scorn*
and

(m) 1 Cor. 12.
31. & 14. 1.
& 13. 4, 5, 6,
7, 8.

(n) Jam. 1.
26, 27.

The Necessity of Heresies asserted, &c.

and derision to the Tabernacles of the Ishmaelites, Edomites, Moabites, Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, Philistines, Tyrians, and Assyrians, and all the Enemies that are round about us.

To conclude : The common Concernment of us all, is with all industry to *purify our selves from all filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of God, to prepare our Souls for temptation.* Perhaps the Church needeth the Fuller's Soap, or the refining Fire, and God may think it seasonable to enter his Judgments at his own House. To endure which, an integrity of Affections, as well as Principles, is most absolutely necessary. Upon which previous Qualifica-

(o) Jam. 1. 2.
1 Pet. 3. 14.
15.

tion, (o) Let us count it all joy, when we fall into temptation, and esteem them happy that endure, being afraid of no terror, nor being troubled : but let us sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, being ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness (toward Man) and fear (toward God) rejoicing, and being exceeding glad, that we are accounted worthy to suffer for his sake, and to bear in our Body the marks of the Lord Jesus. For what the late Royal Martyr foretold of his own Reputation upon his Sufferings, I can confidently preface of the Glory of this Church, as the result of her present Afflictions,

(p) ^{ΕΙΧΩΝ}
^{ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΗ.}

upon former Experiences : (p) *That after Owls and Bats have had the freedom of the night, and darker times, it shall, like the Sun, rise again, and recover it self to such a degree of splendor, as those feral Birds shall be unwilling to behold, and unable to bear.* (q) *Nor will the Sufferings of this present time be worthy to be compared to the Glory that shall be revealed in her.* And after the dissolution of our present Bondage, and the power of

(q) Rom 8. 18.

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Tempta-

Temptations, we shall find an exceeding great Reward. For when we have trampled upon the Adder, and Scorpion, and all the Power of the Enemy, God, *that (r) delivered us out of the mouths of Lyons, and from every evil¹⁸ work, will at last bring us to his heavenly Kingdom; To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

F I N I S.

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